

HOLLY

THE PLANT TO GROW

By

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The modern trend in landscape designing is toward the use of more and more hollies, and there are many reasons for this, but chiefly because hollies possess such great value as landscape material and because they are so easy to grow.

The value of hollies in the landscape is due to their unusual beauty and variety, and to their longevity and attraction for song birds. The holly tree is one of our most beautiful evergreens, and its beauty is enhanced by its annual display of bright red berries. Besides, it is associated with Christmas. In fact, "holly" is derived from "holy", because of its decorative use in celebrating the birth of Christ. Almost everyone can grow holly right at home for the purpose of brightening the Yuletide Festivities.

Holly comes in such a variety of size and form and shade of leaf and berry—from leaves smaller than the leaves of boxwood to leaves five or more inches long and with berries which are red, yellow, orange and black, including many tints. Some of the hollies more widely used in the Southeastern States are: (tree forms) AMERICAN HOLLY, *Ilex opaca*. The better types have dark green, glossy, ruffled leaves with typical spines, and large, glossy, bright red berries. The fruit varies greatly in size and shape and color. ENGLISH HOLLY, *Ilex aquifolium*, has not succeeded too well except where nights are cool and humidity is high. It, of all hollies, however, is the best for Christmas, with darker, glossier foliage and larger fruit. (Large Shrubs) CHINESE HOLLY, *Ilex*

cornuta—horned holly, and Burford holly, *Ilex cornuta burfordi*. This holly is in great demand, and is rather scarce. It has real decorative value both in the home and in the landscape. (Medium shrubs) The so-called JAPANESE HOLLIES, *Ilex crenata*, with their boxwood-like leaves and black berries are becoming exceedingly popular. In the North they are often used in the place of boxwood because of their extreme hardiness. They vary in size from large shrubs to dwarf specimens less than a foot high. There are several dozen named varieties. *Ilex crenata rotundifolia* is a rapid grower and is extensively used. Being a male holly, it does not produce berries. Slightly smaller is *Ilex crenata convexa* (bullata) with its glossy convex leaf and black fruit. This holly is extremely popular. (Dwarf types) *Ilex crenata rependens*, known also as *Nummularia*, is semi-dwarf. *Ilex crenata Helleri*, with its tiny leaves, seldom gets over a foot high, although it may spread for several feet. Three of our native hollies deserve mention: *Ilex glabra* with black berries, *Ilex vomitoria*, known as *cassena* or *Yaupon holly*, with red berries, and *Ilex myrtifolia* with long, willow-like leaves and berries of every hue from yellow to red. All three are medium sized evergreen hollies.

Ilex Pernyi, *Ilex ciliospinosa*, *Ilex pernyi veitchi* (from China), *Aquipernyi*, and, from Japan, *Ilex pedunculosa* are valuable when available.

With so many kinds of holly, one can use holly almost anywhere in the landscape—as specimens, hedges, windbreaks, screens, in foundation planting, in the border, and as accent plants.

People ought to use more holly both because of their unusual beauty and number of types and also because they are such long lived plants and are of such great attraction for birds. Hollies really do live a long, long time. Some trees are hundreds of years old. A planting of holly, well done, does not

have to be replaced as often as other kinds of evergreens. It lasts not only for a lifetime but for generations. Besides, hollies attract our song birds, because they shelter the birds from their enemies and from cold winds and also provide food in the form of tempting berries. The robins are especially fond of holly berries, which they seldom attack in the South until after Christmas.

Then, too, hollies are easy to grow. When well established they have long, deep roots to withstand drought. They are very hardy, withstanding heat and cold, and they do well in almost any kind of soil—even poor soil—and in almost any situation. Their requirements are simple. They do best in good soil, rich in humus. Stump-dirt, woods-earth, oak-leaf mold, peat moss, or three year old compost of any kind makes them flourish. They like cottonseed meal. The azalea and camellia fertilizers (4-8-8, with an acid reaction) are good, but a 6-8-8 is better. Apply early in the spring at the rate of 2 lbs. per 100 sq. ft. and repeat every 4-6 weeks until July 1st. Plant in well prepared soil (at least 4 ft. across), water thoroughly the first season and in dry weather, and keep well mulched to a depth of three or four inches with leaves, pine straw, peat moss or compost (if thoroughly decomposed). Keep the weeds pulled out.

A male plant or so of each variety is needed to pollinate the females in order for an annual crop of berries, although some hollies, as *cornuta*, apparently set some fruit without pollination. Bees carry the pollen from wild plants several miles away. Late frosts may kill the fruit of unprotected hollies, just as other fruits.

Holly is troubled with only a few pests. For scale, use an oil emulsion, as Florida Volk, but only half the recommended strength for a summer application, unless you get a summer oil.

For holly leaf miner spray thoroughly with 2 pounds of 50 per cent wettable DDT powder or 2 qts. of an emulsion containing 25 per cent DDT diluted in 100 gallons of water, applied when the first new twig growth has 3 or 4 leaves.

For Southern Red Mite, which sucks the leaf sap and causes the foliage to have a sickly grayish appearance, apply Vapotone (hexaethyl tetraphosphate) diluted 1 to 800 with water about or just before June 1st, and repeat twice, a month apart. Or use Parathion at the rate of 1 to 2 lbs. of a 25 per cent wettable powder to 100 gallons of water. Learn how to protect yourself from these dangerous chemicals: do not breathe or get on skin and use rubber gloves and an MSA Comfo Farm-Spray Respirator (Mine Safety Appliances Co., Pittsburgh 8) or work away from the wind. Get instruction book.

Frequent hard sprayings with the hose during the growing season tend to wash off newly hatched insect enemies of holly and other evergreens.

For tar spot (black spot on leaves) apply more humus and fertilizer.

Remember to use plenty of hollies to beautify your own grounds.

FRIERSON'S FLOWERS
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